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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: PAKISTAN, IRAN-ISRAEL, NATO MINISTERIAL, VP

BIDEN IN EUROPE;BERLIN

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[1](#)1. Lead Stories

Primetime newscasts and all major newspapers opened with stories that the future coalition has abandoned its plan to create a "shadow budget." Frankfurter Rundschau headlined: "Shadow over the budget," and Sueddeutsche highlighted: "Serious setback for CDU/CSU and FDP-- Coalition got stuck in financial tricks." Editorials focused on the coalition talks.

[1](#)2. Secret Meeting between Iran and Israel

Frankfurter Rundschau headlined: "Diplomatic Sensation," noting that there was "indirect contact between Israel and Iran during a secret nuclear conference in Cairo." Sueddeutsche headlined on its front page "Israel and Iran break taboo," adding "enemy countries talk about nuclear disarmament in the Middle East. Israel and Iran have for the first time in 30 years participated in talks over a Middle East free of nuclear weapons."

Frankfurter Allgemeine remarked in a front page report: "Israel and Iran have made contact for the first time in 30 years. The Israeli

nuclear authority confirmed the secret meeting... In Tehran, the report was denied as a 'pure lie.'" Inside the paper, Frankfurter Allgemeine added: "The rejection of Israel is part of Iran's ideology. Verbal attacks do not rule out secret meetings; however, if they did take place, making them publically known has most likely undermined Iran's willingness to hold further meetings. The visit of the Israeli representative to Cairo is important for another reason: In the course of the summer, there were increasing calls in Egypt to boycott Israel and to ban meetings with Israelis."

Tageszeitung editorialized: "Be warned against euphoria. The first contact between Iran and Israel could have been the last for a considerable time. This would be sad, because there is no reason why there should not be contact between the two countries, who have never fought a war against each other, do not need to settle accounts, and do not argue over land.... The nuclear missiles aiming at Tel Aviv and Dimona are not the only reason why politicians in Jerusalem are repeatedly considering a preemptive attack. The changing power

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balance in the Middle East is similarly dramatic. If Iran becomes a nuclear power, the moderate Islamic countries would no longer set the tone, but instead a country that puts a great part of its limited resources into the promotion of terror organizations abroad. The relationship between Israel and Iran will not improve, because this would be the end of the 'axis of evil'.... For dtente, the people in Iran who desire more democracy and human rights must assume power."

### 13. Afghanistan/NATO Ministerial

Some German media carried relatively short and factual reports on the NATO ministerial in Bratislava, noting that "NATO Secretary General

Rasmussen called on NATO members to increase their military and political engagement in Afghanistan" (Frankfurter Rundschau). ZDF-

TV's Heute reported: "Rasmussen warned against the failure of the mission, saying that it would only be a matter of time until Europe

reaps the consequences. Defense ministers are therefore particularly struggling with the question of whether to deploy more soldiers to Afghanistan." Tagesspiegel noted: "However, the uncertain political

situation after the manipulated presidential election will make a decision difficult."

Under the headline "The German Holbrooke," Tagesspiegel commented on the creation of the post of German envoy for Afghanistan. "The news

sounds good: the new government wants to nominate an envoy for Afghanistan who is responsible for the country in a cross-departmental way. This would meet an old demand of international and national experts, if the person is taken seriously.... All ministries involved fear that they would lose something. It is therefore important to

nominate somebody who is well-known internationally and well plugged into the government parties. The person must also focus on Pakistan, otherwise the job would be deprived of practical significance. This person would be the counterpart of U.S. envoy Richard Holbrooke, but should certainly not present himself so ruthlessly. Particularly now, as the countries engaged in Afghanistan have come to a turning point, considerable work awaits such an envoy."

#### 14. Taliban in Pakistan

Sueddeutsche's editorial highlighted (in a subheadline) that "in Pakistan, the fear of the Taliban has become bigger than the hatred against the United States." The paper opined: "Militant extremists are only spreading terror, with which they have made themselves the enemy of Pakistanis. For the time being, the people therefore stand

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by the army and its war against the extremists. This sounds trite, but it has not always been like this. For a long time, people believed that their government was participating in the war against terrorism only as America's lapdog. Anti-Americanism continues to be widespread within society... However, the extremists are no longer controllable and they are attacking Pakistan. It is therefore becoming increasingly clear who Pakistan's enemy is: the Taliban.... The people in Pakistan have realized that the Taliban will not resolve their existential problems. However, neither are they hearing anything progressive from their elected leaders. The offensive in Waziristan would be the right time for a reorientation."

#### 15. Biden in Europe

Under the headline "Biden acknowledges Romania's mission in Iraq and Afghanistan," Frankfurter Allgemeine reported: "Vice President Biden emphasized the 'strong strategic partnership' the U.S. has with Romania and spoke up in favor of integrating the Republic of Moldova into euro-Atlantic structures. After talks with Romanian President Basescu, Biden underscored that Romania supports the new American missile defense system.... On Thursday, Biden was expected in Prague... Unlike in Warsaw, the irritation over the cancellation of former President Bush's project to deploy a missile defense shield has not yet subsided.... Biden is not expected to make a specific proposal for the Czech Republic's participation in a mobile missile defense shield."

Berliner Zeitung analyzed: "Biden assures partners during his visit that the new beginning of U.S.-Russian relations will not be at the expense of Poland and the Czech Republic. Both countries still do not believe this, however, and assume that renewed U.S.-Russian relations will be a zero-sum game: if Washington gets closer to Moscow, it will

pull further away from Warsaw and Prague-and vice versa. Obama has decided that he needs Russia as a partner, not an opponent, to meet the current challenges. This will be the starting point for other foreign political decisions."

MURPHY